
UNECE STANDARD FFV-03

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

ARTICHOKES

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NOTE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

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The present revised Standard for Artichokes is based on document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2010/INF.36, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-sixth session.

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UNECE standard FFV-03 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of artichokes

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to artichoke heads of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Cynara cardunculus* L. Scolymus Group to be supplied fresh to the consumer, artichokes for industrial processing being excluded.

The names "Poivrade" and "Bouquet" refer to young, cone-shaped artichokes of the violet type.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for artichokes after preparation and packaging.

However, if applied at stages following export/dispatch, products may show in relation to the requirements of the standard:

- a slight lack of freshness and turgidity
- for products graded in classes other than the "Extra" Class, a slight deterioration due to their development and their tendency to perish.

The holder/seller of products may not display such products or offer them for sale, or deliver or market them in any manner other than in conformity with this standard. The holder/seller shall be responsible for observing such conformity.

A. Minimum requirements

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the artichokes must be:

- intact
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- fresh in appearance, and in particular showing no sign of withering
- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The stems must be cut off cleanly and must not be longer than 10 cm. This latter provision is not applicable to artichokes packed in bunches, that are made up of a certain number of heads fastened together around the stems or to artichokes of the variety "Spinoso".

The development and condition of the artichokes must be such as to enable them:

- to withstand transportation and handling
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

B. Classification

Artichokes are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

Artichokes in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

The central bracts must be well closed, in accordance with the variety.

The base must show no incipient woodiness.

They must be free from defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

(ii) Class I

Artichokes in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

The central bracts must be well closed, in accordance with the variety.

The base must show no incipient woodiness.

The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- a slight defect in shape
- slight skin defects
- slight deterioration due to frost (cracks)
- very slight bruising.

(iii) Class II

This class includes artichokes that do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

They may be slightly open.

The following defects may be allowed, provided the artichokes retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape
- skin defects
- deterioration due to frost (slight, partial detachment of the epidermis)
- slight bruising
- slight staining on the outer bracts
- incipient woodiness of the base.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section of the head.

The minimum size shall be 6 cm.

To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed:

- 1.5 cm, where the diameter of the smallest artichoke in the package is between 6 cm and up to but excluding 9 cm
- 2 cm, where the diameter of the smallest artichoke in the package is 9 cm or more

In addition, a diameter from 3.5 cm up to but excluding 6 cm is allowed for artichokes of the "Poivrade" and "Bouquet" types.

Uniformity in size is compulsory for the Classes "Extra" and I.

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

At all marketing stages, tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.¹

A. Quality tolerances

(i) "Extra" Class

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of artichokes not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class I is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 0.5 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying the requirements of Class II quality.

(ii) Class I

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of artichokes not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 1 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying neither the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements, or of produce affected by decay.

(iii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent by number or weight, of artichokes satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 2 per cent in total may consist of produce affected by decay.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes (if sized): a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of artichokes not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed provided the artichokes conform to a minimum of 5 cm in diameter.

No size tolerance is allowed for artichokes of the "Poivrade" type or "Bouquet" type.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only artichokes of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized).

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

¹ A conformity check shall be made by assessing primary or composite samples. It is based on the principle of presumption that the quality of the randomly taken samples is representative of the quality of the lot. The OECD Operating Rules for Conformity Checks are recommended for application – also by operators – at the stages of dispatch as well as in wholesale and distribution centres and storerooms of food retail.

B. Packaging

The artichokes must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be clean and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly of paper or stamps bearing trade specifications, is allowed, provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Stickers individually affixed to the produce shall be such that, when removed, they neither leave visible traces of glue, nor lead to skin defects.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package² must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:

A. Identification

Packer and/or dispatcher/exporter:

Name and physical address (e.g. street/city/region/postal code and, if different from the country of origin, the country) or a code mark officially recognized by the national authority³ if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry⁴. In the case where there is no street address available, the physical address can be made up of the name of the farm or facility, the nearest village, town, region, and postal code; or GPS coordinates and a PO Box address together with nearest town, region and country shall be accepted as a physical address.⁵

B. Nature of produce

- “Artichokes” if the contents are not visible from the outside
- Name of the variety for the "Extra" Class
- “Poivrade” or “Bouquet”, where appropriate
- “Spinoso”, where appropriate.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁶ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

² These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages bearing these particulars. However, they do apply to sales packages (pre-packages) presented individually.

³ The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference “packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)” has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark, and the code mark should be preceded by the ISO 3166 (alpha-2) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

⁴ See <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/codemarkregistry.html>.

⁵ Reservation by the United States of America on the use of a PO Box address, as it may not allow facility inspections or rapid intervention in case of recalls, and is not part of its national labelling requirement related to packer and/or dispatcher/exporter.

⁶ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Number of heads
- Size (if sized) expressed in minimum and maximum diameters of the heads.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1962

Last revised 2010

Aligned with the Standard Layout 2023
